

A Familiar Compound Ghost: Allusion and the Uncanny

Sarah Brown



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A Familiar Compound Ghost explores the relationship between allusion and the uncanny in literature. An unexpected echo or quotation in a new text can be compared to the sudden appearance of a ghost or mysterious double, the reanimation of a corpse, or the discovery of an ancient ruin hidden in a modern city. In this scholarly and suggestive study, Brown identifies moments where this affinity between allusion and the uncanny is used by writers to generate a particular textual charge, where uncanny elements are used to flag patterns of allusion and to point to the haunting presence of an earlier work.

A Familiar Compound Ghost traces the subtle patterns of connection between texts centuries, even millennia apart, from Greek tragedy and Latin epic, through the plays of Shakespeare and the Victorian novel, to contemporary film, fiction and poetry. Each chapter takes a different uncanny motif as its focus: doubles, ruins, reanimation, ghosts and journeys to the underworld.

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